



anujjindal.in



Indian Kingdoms in 18th Century

www.anujjindal.in

KEY BENEFITS OF OUR COURSES



Video Lectures



Live Sessions



PDFs



Mock
Tests



Current
Affairs



Daily Preparation
Material



Personalised
Feedback

Our course structure includes a lot of perks that are otherwise unavailable elsewhere.

It is a comprehensive guide to help you crack the paper & secure your dream position.

We provide personal solutions to all queries using a Telegram group wherein Anuj Jindal himself will clarify your doubts.

We curate the learning strategies of past year toppers to help you learn from the success of the best.



Table of Contents

Indian Kingdoms in the 18th Century

Introduction	4
Decline of the Mughals	4
Aurangzeb's Responsibility	5
Weak successors of Aurangzeb	6
Degeneration of Mughal Nobility	7
Court Factions	8
Defective Law of Succession	8
The rise of Marathas	9
Military Weaknesses	9
Economic Bankruptcy	10
Nature of Mughal State	10
Invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali	10
Rise of regional powers	11
Bengal	11
Oudh/Awadh	12
Hyderabad and the Carnatic	12
The Sikhs	13
The Marathas	13
The Jats	15
Rajputs	15
Mysore	16
Travancore	16

Indian Kingdoms in the 18th Century

INTRODUCTION

- The eighteenth century in India was characterized by two critical transitions which altered the structure of power and initiated important social and economic changes.
- The first was the transition in the first half of the century from the Mughal Empire to the regional political orders. The second was the transition in the polity, society and economy.
- In the 18th century, the English East India Company steered its way to a position of political dominance. The decline of the Mughal authority gave rise to the emergence of several independent kingdoms.

Decline of Mughal Empire

- The Mughal dynasty founded by Zahiruddin Babur following his decisive victory at the battle of Panipat in 1526 continued to grow in size under his successors. It reached its territorial climax under Aurangzeb (1657-1707) when the Mughal Empire was stretched from Kashmir in the North to Jinji in the South and from Hindukush in the West to Chittagong in the East.
- But the process of decline had set in during the time of Aurangzeb and it could not be arrested by his weak successors. Ironically such territorial gains by Aurangzeb instead of increasing the strength of the empire actually

weakened the foundations because of his socio-religious policies which, in sharp contrast to his ancestors, were intolerant and fundamentalist in nature.

- After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the empire kept shrinking in size and kept weakening. In the 150 years between 1707 when Aurangzeb died and 1857 when the last of the Mughals Bahadur Shah Zafar was deposed by the British there were as many as 12 Mughals who occupied the throne.
- Two of the longest surviving, Muhammad Shah (1719-48) and Shah Alam (1759-1806) these witnessed devastating attacks by Nadirshah (1739) and Ahmadshah Abdali, who attacked six times during 1748-67.
- These aggressions left the foundations of the Mughal Empire completely shaken apart from leading to rebellion, revolt and cessation by regional powers all around.

Aurangzeb's Responsibility

- Although the expansion of the Mughal Empire reached its optimum point under Aurangzeb yet it only resembled an inflated balloon. The Mughal Empire had expanded beyond the point of effective control and its vastness only tended to weaken the centre.
- His policy of religious bigots proved counterproductive and provoked a general discontent in the country and the empire was faced with the rebellions of Sikhs, the Jats, the Bundelas, the Rajputs and above all, the Marathas.
- Aurangzeb was orthodox in his outlook and he tried to remain within the framework of Islamic law which was developed outside India in vastly dissimilar situations and could hardly be applied rigidly to India.
- The failure of Aurangzeb to respect the susceptibilities of his Non-Muslim subjects on many occasions, his adherence to the time-worn policy towards temples and re-imposition of Jizyah as laid down by the Islamic law did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side or generate a greater sense of loyalty

towards a state based on Islamic Law. On the other hand, it alienated the Hindus and strengthened the hands of those sections which were opposed to the Mughal Empire for political or other reasons.

- Aurangzeb's mistaken policy of continuous war in Deccan was again a fatal blow to the Mughal Empire. It continued for 27 years and drained the resources of the empire completely. So Aurangzeb's various such steps marked the start of the Mughal Empire's decline.

Weak successors of Aurangzeb

- The Mughal system of government being despotic depended much on the personality of the emperor, thus a succession of weak emperors was reflected in every field of administration. All the emperors after Aurangzeb were weaklings and therefore unable to meet the challenges both internal and external.
- Bahadur Shah-I was too old to maintain the prestige of the empire and he liked to appease all parties by profuse grants of titles and rewards. Due to his such attitude he was nicknamed "Shah-i-Bekhabar" (The Headless king), Jahandar Shah (1712-13), the next in succession, was a wildly extravagant fool, Farrukshiyar was a complete coward, while Muhammad Shah spent more time in watching animal fights.
- Due to his addiction to wine and women, Muhammad shah got the title of "Rangeela". Ahmad Shah was even one step ahead in his sensual pursuit and extended the 'Harem' to a very large area where he spent weeks or months.
- In administration, he also took equally foolish decisions. Thus successors were evidently weak and the huge task of managing such a vast Mughal empire was far beyond their capacity.

Degeneration of Mughal Nobility

- There was also the degeneration of the Mughal nobility. When the Mughals came to India, they had a hardy character. But too much wealth, luxury and leisure softened their character. Their harems became full. They got plenty of wine. They went in palanquins to the battlefields. Such nobles were not fit to fight against the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs.
- The Mughal Nobility degenerated at a very rapid pace. The chief reason for the degeneration of the nobility was that gradually it became a closed corporation. It gave no opportunity for the promotion of capable men belonging to other classes as had been the case earlier.
- The offices of the state became hereditary and the persevered to the people belonging to a few families. Another reason was their incorrigible habits of extravagant living and pompous display which weakened their morale and drained their limited financial resources.
- Most of the Nobles spent huge sums on keeping large harems, maintaining a big staff of servants etc. and indulged in other forms of senseless show. The result was that many of the nobles became bankrupt despite their large Jagirs. Dismissal from service or loss of Jagirs spelt ruin for most of them. That promoted many of them to form groups and factions for securing large and profitable Jagirs.
- Factionalism kept on growing till it extended to all branches of administration the two major causes of factionalism were the struggle for Jagirs and personal advancement and the struggle for supremacy between the Wazir and the Monarch.
- Thus, faction fights weakened the monarchy, gave a chance to the Marathas, Jats etc. to increase their power and to interfere in the court politics and prevented the Emperors from following a consistent policy.

- Factionalism became the most dangerous bane of the Mughal Rule from 1715 onwards. To save themselves from these faction fights, the Mughal Emperors depended upon unworthy favourites and that worsened the situation.

Court Factions

- Towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, influential nobles at the court organised themselves into pressure groups. Though these groups were formed on clan or family relationships, personal affiliations or interests were the dominating factors. These groups kept the country in a state of perpetual political unrest.
- The 'turani' or central Asian party consisted of nobles from Transoxiana. During the reign of Muhammad Shah, Asaf Zah, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Kamruddin and Zakariya Khan were the principal leaders of the Turani faction, while the leaders of the Persian faction were Amir Khan, Ishaq Khan and Saadat Khan. These factions kept their retainers who were mostly recruited from central Asia or Persia as the case might be.

Defective Law of Succession

- Zulfikar Khan acted as the king-maker in the war of succession which followed after the death of Bahadur Shah I in 1712. Likewise, the Sayyid Brothers acted as king-makers from 1713 to 1720.
- They were instrumental in the appointment of four kings to the throne. After them, Mir Mohammad Amin and Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk acted as king-makers. Thus the absence of the law of succession contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The rise of Marathas

- Maratha also had a history of suppression by the empire, especially in the war of 27 years, which started with an invasion of the Maratha Empire by Mughals under Aurangzeb in 1681.
- By helping the Sayyid brothers establish a puppet emperor in Delhi, Peshwa (prime minister) Balaji Viswanath secured for his master a Mughal Sanad (imperial order) recognizing Shahu's right to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi (one-fourth and one-tenth respectively of government revenue) in six Mughal provinces of Deccan, Chauth of Malwa and Gujarat and independent status in Maharashtra.
- The Marathas became the strongest power in Northern India in the mid-eighteenth century. They played the role of king-makers at the Delhi Court. They acted as the defenders of the country against foreign invaders like Ahmad Shah Abdali.
- Indeed, the Marathas did not succeed in their great mission but their conquests in Northern India in the 18th century gave a death blow to the Mughal Empire.
- Marathi believed in Hinduism, the religious intolerant positions adopted by the Muslim Mughal Empire provoked the resentment of the Marathas.
- The Mughal Emperors were unable to accommodate the Marathas and to adjust their claims within the framework of the Mughal Empire.
- The consequent breakdown of the attempt to create a composite ruling class in India also impacted all these developments on politics at the court and in the country along with the security of the north-western passes.

Military Weaknesses

- Another cause of the Mughal downfall was the deterioration and demoralization in the Mughal Army due to the abundance of riches of India

who were privileged to use wine and comforts which had their evil effects on the Mughal Army and nothing was done to stop that deterioration.

- The soldiers cared more for personal comforts and less for winning battles as there were several reasons for the deterioration of militaries such as indiscipline, luxurious habits, inactivity and commissariat and cumbrous equipment.
- The impotence of the Mughal Armies was declared to the world when the Mughals failed to recapture Qandahar despite three determined efforts made by them.

Economic Bankruptcy

- After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire faced financial bankruptcy. The beginning had already been made in the time of Aurangzeb and after his death, the system of tax became harsher.
- Although the Government did not get much by this method, the people were ruined as they were taxed to such an extent that they lost all incentive to produce.
- Shah Jahan had increased the state demand to one-half of the produce. The extravagant expenditure by Shah Jahan on buildings was a crushing burden upon the resources of the country.

Nature of Mughal State

- The Mughal government was essentially a police government and confined its attention mainly to the maintenance of internal and external order and collection of revenue.
- The Mughals also failed to effect a fusion between Hindus and Muslims and create a composite nation. Whatever little effort was made by Akbar to weld

the people into a nation was undone by the bigotry of Aurangzeb and his worthless successors.

Invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali

- The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 gave a death blow to the stumbling Mughal Empire. Besides depleting the Mughal treasury of its wealth, it exposed to the world the military weakness of the empire and its utter degeneration.
- The repeated invasion of Nadir's successors, Ahmad Shah Abdali, deprived the empire of frontier provinces of Punjab Sindh, Kashmir etc. The Mughal authority had so greatly shrunk that in 1761 that Abdali fought the battle of Panipat not against the Mughal Empire but against the Marathas who virtually controlled the whole of northern India.

Neglected the Development of the Navy

- The Mughals neglected the development of the Navy and that proved suicidal for them.
- The later Mughals did not pay any attention to the sea power and left their coast-line completely undefended.
- Later, that coastline was exploited by the Europeans who ultimately established their mastery over India.

Rise of regional powers

- The emergence of these states in the eighteenth century, therefore, represented a transformation rather than a collapse of the polity. Some of these states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad, may be characterized as 'succession states'.

- They arose as a result of the assertion of autonomy by governors of Mughal provinces with the decay of central power. Others, such as the Maratha, Afghan, Jat and Punjab states were the product of rebellions by local chieftains, zamindars and peasants against Mughal authority. Not only did the politics in the two types of states or zones differ to some extent from each other, but there were differences among all of them because of local conditions.

Bengal

- The province of Bengal gradually became independent of Mughal control after Murshid Quli Khan became the Governor or Nazim of Bengal. He was given the unprecedented privilege of holding the two offices of Nizam and Diwan simultaneously.
- The division of power, which was maintained throughout the Mughal period to keep both the imperial officers under control through a system of checks and balances, was thus done away with. This helped Murshid Quli, who was already known for his efficient revenue administration, to consolidate his position further.
- The foundation of Bengal state was of course his very successful revenue administration, which even in the days of political chaos elsewhere in the Empire, made Bengal a constant revenue paying surplus area. This efficient collection system was operated through powerful intermediary zamindars.

Oudh/Awadh

- The Subah of Awadh was extended from the Kannauj district in the west to the river Karmnasha in the east. It became virtually independent in 1722 when Saadat Khan was appointed its Governor. He succeeded in suppressing lawlessness and disciplining the big zamindars.

- He also carried out a fresh revenue settlement and thus, increasing the financial resources of his government. Saadat Khan's successor was his nephew Safdar Jang, who has simultaneously appointed the wazir of the Empire in 1748 and granted in addition the province of Allahabad.
- 1753 marked an important turning point in the political history of north India, by signifying the visible succession of Awadh and Allahabad from the remainder of the dwindling Empire.

Hyderabad and the Carnatic

- The autonomous Kingdom of Hyderabad was founded in 1724 by a powerful noble at the imperial court, Chin Qulich Khan, who eventually took the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. He never openly declared his independence from the Central government but in practice, he acted as an independent ruler.
- He subdued the refractory zamindars and showed tolerance towards the Hindus who had economic power in their hands and as result, Hyderabad witnessed the emergence of a new regional elite who supported the nizam.
- The Carnatic was one of the subahs of the Mughal Deccan and as such came under the Nizam of Hyderabad's authority.

The Sikhs

- Founded at the end of the 15th century by Guru Nanak, the Sikh religion spread among the Jat peasantry and other lower castes of Punjab. The transformation of the Sikhs into a militant, fighting community was begun by Guru Hargobind.
- It was, however, under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Guru of Sikhs, that they became a political and military force. Aurangzeb was initially not very hostile to the Sikhs; but as the community grew in size

and challenged the central authority of the Mughals, the emperor turned against them.

- Everything goes well until Ranjit Singh died in 1839. Within a decade of his death, independent Sikh rule disappeared from Punjab, as a struggle for power among the mighty Sikh chiefs and the royal family feuds helped the English to take over without much difficulty.

The Marathas

- The Maratha civil war was brought to an end, the control of the state gradually passed on from the line of Shivaji to that of the Peshwas'. After Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720, he was succeeded as Peshwa by his 20-year-old son Baji Rao I.
- By 1740, when Baji Rao died, the Marathas had won control over Malwa, Gujarat and parts of Bundelkhand. The Maratha families of Gaekwad, Holkar, Sindhia and Bhonsle came into prominence during this period. In the short period of 20 years, he had changed the character of the Maratha state.
- From the kingdom of Maharashtra, it had been transformed into an Empire expanding in the North. He, however, failed to lay the firm foundations of an empire.
- New territories were conquered and occupied but little attention was paid to their administration. The Marathas did not try to overturn the local zamindars for the payment of yearly tributes. A civilian system of revenue administration took time to emerge in this newly conquered region and this was a feature typical of all Maratha conquests.
- After the death of Baji Rao, his son Balaji Bajirao, better known as Nana Saheb (1740-61) was appointed in his place. This was indeed the peak period of Maratha glory when all parts of India had to face Maratha depredations. In the face of an Afghan invasion overrunning Lahore and Multan, a treaty in 1752 brought the Mughal emperor under the protection of Marathas.

- In the crucial Third Battle of Panipat, the Maratha forces under Sadashivrao Bhau were routed by Abdali and this marked the beginning of the decline of Maratha power. The Peshwa died within weeks and as the young Peshwa Madhav Rao tried to gain control of the polity, factionalism among the Maratha Sardars raised its ugly head.
- It was perhaps only the Maratha state that had the potential to develop into a new pan-India empire replacing the Mughals, but that potential was never fully realized because of the nature of the Maratha Polity itself.

Causes for Maratha defeat in Third Battle of Panipat -

- Abdali's forces outnumbered the Maratha forces.
- Near famine conditions prevailed in the Maratha camp as the road to Delhi was cut off.
- The Maratha policy of indiscriminate plunder has estranged both Muslim and Hindu powers like Jats and Rajputs.
- Mutual jealousies of the Maratha commanders considerably weakened their side.
- Abdali's forces were better organised and also better equipped. The use of swivel guns mounted on camels caused havoc in the Maratha forces.

Political significance of Third Battle of Panipat -

- Though Maratha suffered heavy loss of human lives in the battle, Maratha power soon began to prosper as before. It continued to do so for forty years until British supremacy was established by the second Anglo-Maratha war (1803).
- By the death of great Maratha captains, a path was opened for the guilty ambitions of Raghunath Rao.
- It lowered Maratha prestige in the Indian political world.
- The Maratha dream of an all India empire was irrevocably lost.

- It cleared the way for the rise of the British Empire in India.

The Jats

- The agriculturists' Jat settlers living around Delhi, Mathura and Agra had revolted against the oppressive policies of Aurangzeb. However, the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb suppressed the revolt but the area remained disturbed. Though originally a peasant uprising, the Jat revolt, led by zamindars, soon became predatory.
- The Jat state of Bharatpur was set up by Churaman and Badan Singh. Jat power reached its highest glory under Suraj Mal (1756-1763), who compelled the Mughal authorities to recognize him. He successfully withstood a siege by Abdali's army and supported the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat.

Rajputs

- Rajputs dedicated considerable efforts to expand their home territories and in order to build near-autonomous regional kingdoms. Furthermore, as the Mughal Empire was gradually being burdened with difficulties, Rajas stopped paying tribute.
- The desire for independence partially arose from the harsh treatments they were granted, dating back to the reign under Aurangzeb. The ruthless campaigns of Aurangzeb in Rajasthan as well as his religious intolerance, including the revival of Jizyah, significantly aroused the anger of many Rajputs.

Mysore

- The state of Mysore under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan was involved in establishing a centralised military hegemony. Its territorial ambitions and

trading interests got it engaged in a state of constant warfare. Haider Ali had invaded and annexed Malabar and Calicut in 1766, thus expanding the frontiers of Mysore significantly.

- They conflicted with Marathas and other powers in the region like Hyderabad and then the English on whom Haider Ali inflicted a heavy defeat near Madra in 1769. After he died in 1782, his son Tipu Sultan followed his father's policies. His rule came to an end with a defeat at the hands of the English in 1799 – he died defending his capital Srirangapatna.

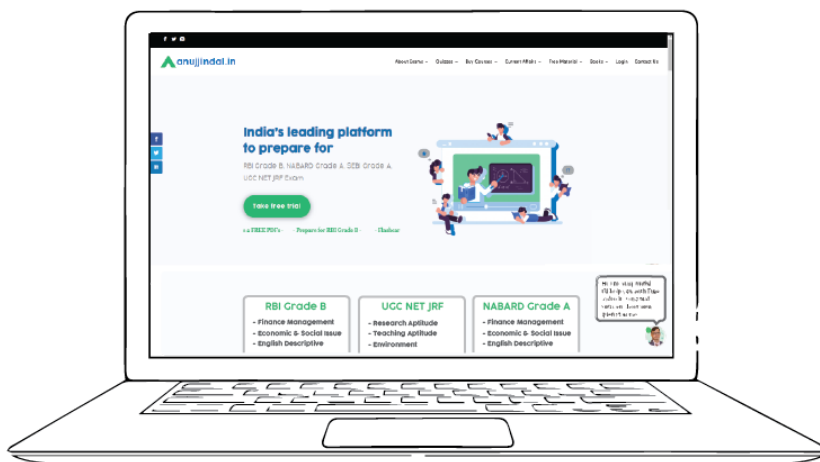
Travancore

- Further south, the southernmost state of Travancore had always maintained its independence from the Mughal rule. It gained importance after 1729 when its king Martanda Varma started expanding his dominions with the help of a strong and modern army trained along Western lines.
- The Dutch were ousted from the region; the English were made to accept his term of trade and local feudal chiefs were suppressed. He undertook many irrigation works, built roads and canals, and gave active encouragement to foreign trade.
- Travancore withstood the shock of a Mysorean invasion in 1766 and under Martanda Verma's successor Rama Verma its capital became a centre of scholarship and art. In his death towards the closing years of the eighteenth century, the region lost its former glory and soon succumbed to British pressure, accepting a Resident in 1800.

Check our website www.anujjindal.in for enrolment, Course details and other updates!

Or

Log on to our mobile application.





“HALL OF FAME”

RBI



AIR 03 RBI : Muhammad Ali

AIR 06 RBI : Aditya Sood

AIR 10 RBI : Sameer

AIR 11 RBI : Abhishek

550+ Students cleared RBI Phase 1

300+ Students clear RBI Phase 2

48 Students got selected in RBI

SEBI



AIR 01 : Rajendra S

600+ Students cleared Phase 1

300+ Students cleared Phase 2

60+ Students selected in SEBI

NABARD



1100+ Students cleared Phase 1

250+ Students cleared Phase 2

30 Students selected in NABARD

UGC NET JRF



260+ Students selected in UGC NET JRF